

REMARKS

Currently, claims 1, 2, 4-32 and 56 are pending in the application, of which claims 21-32 are withdrawn from further consideration. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 4-20 and 56 are currently active in this application, of which claim 1 is independent.

In view of the following Remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejections for the reasons discussed below.

Objection to the Claims

Claim 1 was objected to for being drawn to a non-elected invention. This objection is respectfully traversed.

Previously, Applicant filed a Petition from Requirement for Restriction Under 37 CFR §1.144 on December 3, 2004 to request reconsideration and withdrawal of the Requirement for Restriction mailed on December 15, 2003. The Petition was denied on March 7, 2005 because claims 1-32 and 56 require essential elements, such as (a) a sealant-applying unit, (b) a liquid crystal depositing unit and (c) a substrate-attaching unit, and other non-essential elements, but the essential elements are not present in base claims 21 and 24.

Accordingly, in the Office Action mailed on March 11, 2005, claims 21-32 were withdrawn from further consideration, and claims 1-20 and 56 became subject to the examination for this application. In the Office Action, the Examiner asserted that claim 1 was drawn to a non-elected invention because claim 1 lacks recitations drawn to the previously elected INVENTION XI directed to an in-line conveying unit.

In Reply and Amendment under 37 CFR §1.116, claim 1 was amended to further recite "an in-line convey unit conveying the substrates in the in-line system". Claim 1 was further amended to incorporate the limitations from its dependent claim 3 in response to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

In the Office Action mailed on September 8, 2005, the Examiner stated that the objection of claim 1 in the previous Office Action was withdrawn. However, the Examiner asserted claim 1 is objected to because of the newly added limitation, which is incorporated from its dependent claim 3, is drawn to non-elected INVENTION VI. Applicant respectfully disagrees with this assertion.

As mentioned in the previous Petition, the invention of claim 1 is directed to a single invention of an in-line system for manufacturing liquid crystal displays, comprising several essential elements, such as (a) a sealant-applying unit, (b) a liquid crystal depositing unit and (c) a substrate-attaching unit, and other non-essential elements.

It is submitted that, even after incorporating the limitation of dependent claim 3, the invention of claim 1 is still directed to the same invention of an in-line system for manufacturing liquid crystal displays comprising the aforementioned essential elements and non-essential elements, and hence does not become an "independent" or "distinct" invention under MPEP §802.01.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the objection to claim 1.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1, 2, 4-20 and 56 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 5,978,065 issued to Kawasumi, et al. ("Kawasumi" hereafter) in view of Japanese Patent Publication No. 56114928 by Adachi ("Adachi" hereafter). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for at least the following reasons.

This rejection was made based on the Examiner's assumption that Applicant would delete "a sealant heat-treating unit forming a reaction-prevention layer on a surface of the sealant to prevent a reaction between the sealant and a liquid crystal material" in response to the aforementioned objection of claim 1.

However, as mentioned above, the invention of claim 1 is still directed to an in-line system for manufacturing liquid crystal displays, and hence does not become an "independent" or "distinct" invention under MPEP §802.01. Since the rejection was based on the incorrect assumption, it is respectfully submitted that this rejection is no longer valid.

Also, as mentioned in the previous response, the asserted combination of Kawasumi and Adachi fails to disclose or suggest "a sealant heat-treating unit forming a reaction-prevention layer on a surface of the sealant to prevent a reaction between the sealant and a liquid crystal material" as recited in claim 1. Thus, it is submitted that claim 1 and its dependent claims 2, 4-20 and 56 are patentable over them.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-20 and 56.

Claims 1, 2, 4-20 and 56 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawasumi in view of U. S. Patent No. 6,680,759 by Ogawa ("Ogawa" hereafter). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for at least the following reasons.

As mentioned in the previous response, Ogawa does not qualify as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) because Ogawa was filed after the priority date of the present application. Applicant also submitted (a) English translation of the verified copy of the priority document, and (b) a statement verifying accuracy of translation, in the previous response.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-20 and 56.

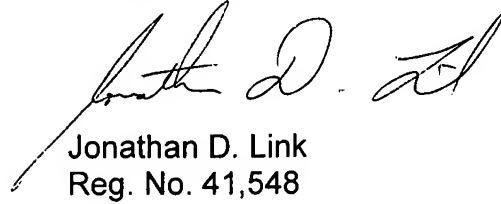
Conclusion

Applicant believes that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action and respectfully submits that all of the stated objections and grounds for rejection have been overcome or rendered moot. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are allowable and that the application is in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's undersigned representative at the number below to expedite prosecution.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,



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